

Uveitis

by Sarah Voss BVMedSci (Hons) BVM BVS MRCVS

Uveitis (other names include moon blindness and periodic ophthalmia) is a painful and potentially very serious condition – it is the most common cause of sight loss in horses. Uveitis simply describes inflammation within the eye, this affects three different parts of the eye – the blood supply to the eye, the muscles controlling the diameter of the iris, and the iris itself.

This inflammation can be initiated in a number of ways, and any damage or irritation to the eye can initiate a reflex inflammatory response. This includes physical trauma, and corneal diseases such as ulcers. Uveitis can also commonly be immune-mediated (especially in Appaloosas), and may affect one or both eyes recurrently. Geographically, the causes of uveitis vary greatly, and some of the infectious causes that commonly affect horses in other countries are currently being investigated in the UK.

Clinical Signs

The most common signs that your horse may display are squinting, watery discharge, rubbing his eye and being uncomfortable in bright sunlight. On closer inspection, the inside of the eye may appear “hazy”, you may also notice that the pupil appears very small and narrow, even in a dark stable.

Treatment

It is important that every painful eye is examined by a vet as soon as possible, as some diseases may present similarly but require very different treatments.

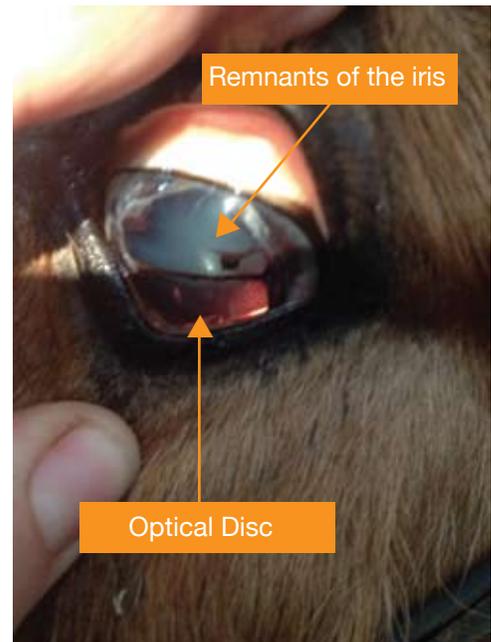
The mainstay of treating uveitis is using anti-inflammatory drugs to reduce inflammation and pain. We will prescribe steroid-based eye drops for you to administer daily, and in addition to this we will put drops in the eye to dilate the pupil. This is because the inflammation causes the muscles controlling the iris to go into spasm – these drops relax the pupil and relieve the pain caused by this spasm. Often the horse will be given oral pain relief. We may recommend that you continue treatment for a few weeks past resolution of the clinical signs.

Managing a Horse With Uveitis

It is important to keep the horse in a darkened stable, especially if eye drops have been given. This may then progress to being turned out in a good quality UV protective fly mask. It is important to monitor a horse who has had uveitis, as very often it may be part of a syndrome of recurrent disease. For horses that suffer from repeated episodes of immune-mediated uveitis further treatment options are available, including surgical implants that release drugs within the eye to prevent the horse's immune system from causing uveitis.

Long Term Problems

It is important to try to control uveitis, as if it remains untreated significant damage can be caused to the eye, and can ultimately result in total vision loss. When a horse is vetted, the vet will carefully examine the eyes to look for previous signs of uveitis. The picture shows a Miniature Shetland whose uveitis was uncontrolled after a blunt trauma to the eye. The pale disc you can see is the Optic Disc – which is the head of the nerve connecting the retina to the brain!



Vets out and about this summer

- **Brightling Park International Horse Trials 4th-5th July**
- **Chilham Castle International Horse Trials 8th-9th August**
- **Rye Country Fair Horse & Dog Show Sat 15th August**
- **Firle Place International Horse Trials 29-30th August**

FREE ACTH tests are back

Get your horse tested for Cushings disease with free laboratory fees from 1st July to the end of October 2015. More info on www.talkaboutlaminitis.co.uk



Ashford 01233 500505 Hawkhurst 01580 752301 Rye 01797 222265 Canterbury 01227 200992

Straight from the Horse's mouth

Stringhalt

Strange veterinary terms explained...



Stringhalt is a sudden flexion of one or both hind legs in the horse, most easily seen while the horse is walking or trotting. It is most evident when the horse is backing up slowly, turning on the affected leg or suddenly frightened. It can involve one or both hind legs of the horse. It is a spasmodic contraction of the lateral extensor tendons of the hind legs.



Has your horse's Flu Vaccination lapsed?

Take advantage of the latest Milbourn Equine / Merial offer in June and July and get those vaccinations back on track.

In partnership with Merial, we are offering a discounted primary vaccination course; £61.50 (flu and tetanus) or £57.75 (flu) for the first two vaccinations - a saving of £20.50 off the usual price.

Please note: This offer is open to all equines over 12 months of age that have not yet been vaccinated against equine influenza or are overdue a booster. Any visit fee must be borne by the horse owner.



Barretts



Barretts Land Rover and Jaguar are offering Milbourn Equine clients a £200 credit

voucher towards their vet bills. All you have to do is buy a new or used car from Barretts Land Rover or Jaguar and produce proof that you are a client of Milbourn Equine. Call our Ashford practice on 01233 500505 for further details. Terms and conditions apply.

Milbourn Equine continually invest in the professional development of all of the Milbourn Team to ensure they are kept abreast of new technology, procedures and medications.

Most recently a two day in-house course was held at our Sevington clinic by Chris Pearce CertEM(IntMed) Cert ES(SoftTissue) BAEDT MRCVS on advanced equine veterinary dentistry skills. This included advanced rasping techniques, dental extractions, diastema burring, close clinical inspection of the whole mouth including the temporomandibular joint and also the surface of the teeth to pick up early changes before tooth extraction is necessary.



Don't forget a veterinary surgeon can carry out routine dental work on a zone visit.

Sedation for dental work is advised in order to allow proper, safe and efficient examination.

- Rasp teeth including sedation £75
- Rasp teeth at the same time as a vaccination including sedation £69.50

Breeding from your mare this summer?

Our vets are always available to talk through the options with you and discuss the most suitable stud package. **Again we are offering 10% off EHV vaccinations for your broodmares.**

Gastroscope Dates

There is still time to take advantage of our special offer of £95 for gastroscope first timers.

Sevington – 7th July, 4th August, 1st September
Benenden – 15th July, 19th August, 16th September

New Milbourn Equine Veterinary supplement... Airway Assist

To aid and support a healthy bronchial system in horses. It delivers a complementary blend of natural ingredients and should be fed when the first signs of breathing discomfort appears. It is suitable for all horses.

Contains cider vinegar, honey, garlic, lemon juice and each 30ml daily dose contains 300mg eucalyptus oil and 12mg menthol. It comes in a 1.2Litre bottle with easy dose nozzle. **£37.73**

